

Medical Inspector's Office,

DEPARTMENT OF THE GULF.

NEW ORLEANS, LA., APRIL 26th, 1864.

CIRCULAR:

I. The attention of Medical Officers in charge of Hospitals is called to the fact, that the process of discharged for disability is frequently delayed, to the detriment of the service, and to the unnecessary inconvenience, anxiety, and suffering of disabled soldiers, by various irregularities and defects in the papers necessary to discharge.

II. The Statement preliminary to the Surgeon's Certificate of Disability, is frequently imperfect. *All* blank spaces of this statement should invariably be filled, not omitting "Station and Date."

III. The Surgeon's Certificate of Disability is often imperfect, by reason of—

a.—Inaccuracy and incompleteness in the description of the character and extent of the disability.

b.—Omission to state whether the disability existed before or originated since the muster-in to service of the soldier in question.

c.—Omission to state *all* of several concurring causes of disability.

d.—Omission to state that the soldier in question is "physically unfit for the Veteran Reserve Corps."

e.—Omission to state the Degree of Disability.

f.—Manifest inaccuracy in stating the Degree of Disability. The ability of the soldier to earn his subsistence *by manual labor* is the only consideration in determining the Degree of Disability. The loss or entire disabling of any one of the four limbs should be reckoned a total Disability.

g.—The filling of the certificate in other handwriting than that of the officer signing it

IV. Soldiers of the Veteran Reserve Corps are to be discharged from their respective companies in that Corps, and not from the companies to which they previously belonged, and from which they have been transferred; but future reference to their papers will be facilitated, if the Company and Regiment from which they were transferred to the Veteran Reserve Corps, are mentioned in the Statement preliminary to the Certificate of Disability, in the Final Discharge and in the Final Statements.

V. The Final Statements of a soldier discharged from the service in a General Hospital, must invariably be signed by the Surgeon in charge, and not, as sometimes occurs, by the Officer commanding his company. The expression, in Final Statements, "Surgeon's Certificate of Disability," should be followed by "incurred since enlistment," or, "existing before enlistment," as the case may be, whenever that fact can be ascertained. When a soldier is discharged for various causes of disability, one of which arises "from wounds received in battle," it should be clearly and unmistakably set forth in the endorsement upon the Final Statements and Final Discharge, whether such disability from wounds is or is not sufficient to necessitate the discharge of the soldier. The Final Statements should invariably include a statement of any Bounty received by the soldier in question. If no Bounty has been received, that fact will also be stated.

VI. Special attention is directed to the provisions of Art. 1371, Revised U. S. Army Regulations, respecting Final Statements.

VII. Medical Officers in charge of Hospitals, will be held strictly accountable that the errors and omissions herein indicated, do not occur in future, in order that justice be done to the Government and to the soldier.

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Dept. of the Gulf.

